

8 of 8 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2000 The Baltimore Sun Company  
THE BALTIMORE SUN

October 14, 2000, Saturday ,FINAL

**SECTION:** LOCAL ,1B

**LENGTH:** 874 words

**HEADLINE:** Neighbors taking their fight to the court of public opinion  
Apartment sale pits residents against Calvert School

**BYLINE:** Jamie Stiehm

**SOURCE:** SUN STAFF

**BODY:**

A genteel group, the unlikeliest of public protesters, picketed the Calvert School in North Baltimore this week while parents lined up in their Volvos and sport utility vehicles to drop off and pick up their children.

Most were older than age 60, people you might see at a museum, an antique show or a country bed-and-breakfast. In short, folks who were not used to worrying about the roof over their heads - until lately.

They took to the streets to protest the school's plans to buy and raze their apartments at 4300 N. Charles St. for a new middle school and two athletic fields. The battle is being fought in the trenches of prestige and class, pitting a ritzy private school against well-connected neighbors with money and clout.

Brenda Richardson, prominent art historian and former deputy director/curator of the Baltimore Museum of Art, has lived at that address for 26 years. She's prepared a six-page "position paper" on the issue.

Anne Carey Boucher, an artist and widow of William Boucher, former head of the Greater Baltimore Committee, said she "learned to love 4300."

It was the only place that allowed her to keep Bijou, her white dog, which accompanied her on the picket line with about 30 other people.

Filmmaker John Waters, a neighborhood resident who went to Calvert, has sided with the 4300 N. Charles St. residents, showing up at a contentious public meeting Thursday night to make asides like "Nobody's got more money than Calvert."

The school does, indeed, have resources. Headmaster Merrill S. Hall III can count on a heavy-hitting board of trustees, including developer John Leutkemeyer, Alex. Brown Realty Director Robert Kent and attorney Decatur Miller. The Tuscany-Canterbury Association president, Garth Thompson, publicly supported the school's expansion. And they've hired ubiquitous planning consultant Alfred W. Barry III to help counter the residents' experienced lawyer, John C. Murphy.

Murphy declared at Thursday's meeting at a local church: "This deal's not going to go through," telling Hall and Barry that he would take the matter to city and state lawmakers.

Neighbors taking their fight to the court of public opinion Apartment sale pits residents against Calvert School THE  
BALTIMORE SUN October 14, 2000, Saturday

The 130 residents of the garden apartments were outraged last month after they were notified about the sale of the 1965 complex. They started organizing a polite but pointed political protest.

Taking Murphy's advice, residents have waged an intensive letter-writing campaign to Calvert School board members, alumni and parents. They have coated the neighborhood with letters, petitions and signs publicizing their plight. In all, organizers estimate they have sent out nearly 2,000 letters. They hope to meet with Mayor Martin O'Malley.

"I've never heard of this being done before," Murphy said, referring to a school's plans to acquire and demolish the residences. "It's the playing fields they want to tear down the apartments for."

That it might be a lost cause didn't stop Elizabeth Green, 74, from coming out to picket in the noon sun Wednesday. "I intended to stay at 4300 until they carried me out," she said, smiling.

In a twist, among the protesters facing displacement was the state's deputy director of homeless services, Kathleen Riveolois, who said she was "devastated" to lose her home of 16 years. "This is middle-class housing the city cannot afford to lose," she said.

Several retired couples are fond of their city dwellings after spending most of their lives in the county. "We enjoy The Avenue in Hampden, Canton, Fells Point, spending our money in the city," said C. Austin McDonnell Jr., retired from the antiques business.

Even beyond the 80 or so apartments in the 21210 ZIP code, the predicament has touched on a fear of many in North Baltimore neighborhoods: institutional expansion at residents' expense.

Richardson, determined not to go quietly, wrote a paper spelling out problems that might result from adding 100 students to a student body of 340 on a quiet street. Traffic is one thing; the school's acquisition of a second historic house on Oak Place designed by architect Lawrence Hall Fowler is another that troubles her.

The school's trustees have not responded. The headmaster said an answer is "forthcoming" and seemed bewildered by the commotion. Attempting to calm things, Barry, the planning consultant, presented the school's plans at Thursday's meeting. In an interview, he said the 1965 brick buildings are not historic and that the middle school will be built as an addition to a historic Fowler house.

Hall, the headmaster, said the sale means "an unpleasant process for tenants," which Calvert has tried to ease by offering relocation assistance. All may stay until their leases run out, he said, and some will be given month-to-month extensions. But Hall indicated the street protests did not deter the school's plans. He refused to name the purchase price. In any case, he said, the property was going to be sold by Eugene O'Dunne. To date, he added, the school's agency has helped 17 or 18 households relocate.

One mother observing the protest felt caught in the middle.

"I feel very badly for the people displaced," she said. "I'm for the people here at 4300, but I can't say so because there might be retaliation against my child."

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO(S) / MAP(S) 1.** For the long haul: Doris Bell (left), a caregiver for Louise Macdonald (second from left), the Rev. John Mote and Brenda Richardson were among a group of demonstrators.

2. (APARTMENT BLDG./ THE CALVERT SCHOOL)

**LOAD-DATE:** October 15, 2000